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Illegal Israeli actions in Occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory

Security Council
Sixty-eighth year

Identical letters dated 4 March 2013 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Observer Mission of the State of Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, the President of the General Assembly and the President of the Security Council

The situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, which constitutes the State of Palestine, regrettably continues to deteriorate owing to the oppressive, violent practices that Israel, the occupying Power, continues to inflict on the Palestinian people in violation of international law, including humanitarian and human rights law.

Reflecting mounting despair, hundreds of Palestinians have continued to partake in demonstrations against the Israeli occupation, particularly against the abuse of thousands of Palestinians in Israeli prisons, including the recent torture and killing of a Palestinian detainee, Arafat Jaradat, and in solidarity with hunger-striking prisoners, as well as against Israel's settlement, wall and colonization of Palestinian land. Israel's violent suppression of these non-violent civilian protests is causing extensive casualties and further destabilizing the situation.

On Friday, 1 March, numerous demonstrations were held, including in Ramallah, Bethlehem and surrounding villages, Al-Khalil, the village of Bil'in, the village of Nabi Saleh, Anata, Salfit, Abu Dis, Al-Ram, Nablus and at the Qalandiya checkpoint between Ramallah and Jerusalem. Two protesters were critically wounded after being hit by live ammunition: Mahmoud Odeh, aged 20, was shot in the head by Israeli occupying forces at the Qalandiya checkpoint, and Jihad al-Qadi, a Palestinian journalist, was shot in the abdomen while covering demonstrations outside Ofer prison, near Ramallah. At least 15 Palestinian protesters were injured by rubber-coated bullets while more than 40 other people suffered from tear gas inhalation and others were hit by high-velocity gas canisters and stun grenades in the various demonstrations.

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Friday's protests were preceded by other demonstrations throughout the week that were also met with excessive Israeli force. This included a protest on 25 February in which two Palestinian boys, aged 13 and 16, from the Aida refugee camp near Bethlehem, were critically wounded by live ammunition, and protests on 28 February, at the Atara checkpoint near Ramallah, the Huwwara checkpoint near Nablus and outside Ofer prison, resulting in several injuries. In this regard, it must be stated that reports have revealed that Israeli occupying forces used a young Palestinian boy as a human shield when they confronted protesters near Ofer prison on 17 February.

In addition to the systematic violence by the Israeli occupying forces against the Palestinian civilian population, attacks by Israeli settlers also continue. Among recent incidents, on 25 February, a Palestinian woman in East Jerusalem was attacked by a mob of extremists, in an incident fully documented by witnesses, and on 28 February, Israeli settlers launched yet another raid, attacking a group of Palestinian students in the village of Burin.

At the same time, we recall the continuing plight of Palestinian prisoners and detainees in Israeli jails. While two of the Palestinian men on long-term hunger strikes, Tareq Qedan and Jafaar Ezzedine, have ended their hunger strikes following decisions that their detention would not be extended, Samer Issawi and Ayman Sharawnah continue their hunger strikes in protest of their unlawful detention without charge. Both men were transferred to hospital on 27 February owing to their deteriorating health. The health of another Palestinian detainee, Muhammad al-Taj, whose hunger strike has exceeded 70 days, is also in critical condition. We reiterate our call for international attention to be paid to the plight of Palestinians in Israeli captivity and demand respect for their human rights and their release.

The number of Palestinians imprisoned by Israel regrettably continues to grow as the occupying Power has persisted with its arrest campaign, including of children and civilians partaking in protests against the occupation. On one day, 27 February, at least 17 Palestinians were arrested in the cities of Al-Khalil, Bethlehem, Ramallah, Nablus and Tulkarem. On 1 March, several Palestinian leaders belonging to the Fatah faction were arrested and interrogated in East Jerusalem. On 28 February, a Palestinian boy under the age of 18 was sentenced to 19 months in prison for alleged stone-throwing in Al-Khalil. Reports confirm that during the month of February alone Israel arrested at least 382 Palestinians, including 10 women.

All these illegal Israeli practices are exacerbating tensions and casting grave doubts on Israel's claims of commitment to achieving a peace that brings an end to this grotesque military occupation and ensures justice and freedom for the Palestinian people and peace and security between Palestine and Israel. While Israel continues to act in total contradiction to these goals, the international community's responsibilities are clear. Serious efforts are required, foremost by the Security Council, to uphold the law and to hold Israel accountable for its violations. The immediate aim must be to diffuse the current volatile situation and to foster a proper environment for advancing, this year, the achievement of the two-State solution, on the basis of the relevant United Nations resolutions, the Madrid principles, the Arab Peace Initiative and the Quartet's road map, before the viability of that solution is completely destroyed by the occupying Power.

This letter is in follow-up to our previous 456 letters regarding the ongoing crisis in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, which constitutes the territory of the State of Palestine. These letters, dated from 29 September 2000

(A/55/432-S/2000/921) to 25 February 2013 (A/ES-10/583-S/2013/111) constitute a basic record of the crimes being committed by Israel, the occupying Power, against the Palestinian people since September 2000. For all of these war crimes, acts of State terrorism and systematic human rights violations being committed against the Palestinian people, Israel, the occupying Power, must be held accountable and the perpetrators must be brought to justice.

I should be grateful if you would arrange to have the text of the present letter distributed as a document of the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 5, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Feda Abdelhady **Nasser**
Chargé d'affaires a.i.